Social Capital and Institutions. A Tentative Analysis of the Polish Case*

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Abstract

The article deals with the relationship between social capital and institutional system in post-communist Poland. In the first part the author presents the factors contributing to a social fragmentation (and integration) in post-communist and "post-solidarity" Poland. One of the theses shows that these factors should be seen in historical and evolutionary perspective and that even in the beginning of the Solidarity period there have been already seeds of disintegration built into the system. In the second part some empirical illustrations concerning networks of social capital of trust are presented. The author attempts to show the peculiarities of the relationship between the level of interpersonal trust and some aspects of the institutional performance, including the economic one. The concluding part deals with the discrepancies and similarities in the trust level concerning local and European politicians in various European countries.

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1. Introduction: weak social capital in a strong society?

My aim is to reflect about the basic factors uniting and fragmenting Polish society. The weakness of social capital measured for example by the level of trust toward other people and toward institutions (cf eg Domański 2005) is widely perceived. At the same time nevertheless society as a whole does not seem to be torn by any fundamental conflict, people participate in the institutions and processes of the market, and democracy too does not seem to be threatened. Although politicians are trying to present the vision of a country divided into two parts: Poland of solidarity values and Poland representing liberal values, this cleavage exists more in social consciousness than in the social structure. This is why it is worth considering what are the mechanisms uniting society, how they are joined in institutional structures and what mechanisms in turn favour disintegration. What in the end compensates for the lack of the capital of social trust, allowing institutional orders to form? Underlying this analysis too is the conviction that at present we should devote ever more attention to the links between individual actors in social life rather than to the composition of the actors themselves. This is because to a certain degree the significance of these individual actors such as large classes, social movements is decreasing, while the role of networks and structures of connections between people, groups and individuals, between a multiplicity of actors that is, is growing (Rychard 2002). This brings to the fore the problem of bonds[ii], of mechanisms of integration and distintegration.

I begin my analysis by considering what role is played in the understanding of these phenomena by the legacy of the Solidarity social movement. Its specific characteristics and above all the very fact of its appearance in a country with a low level of social capital are very important here. Next I will present an introductory attempt at analysis of the mechanisms of creation of social capital, of processes of integration and disintegration based on empirical data and on the views of other authors. This will be an analysis of the uniting and disintegrating mechanisms (with regard to the role of social capital) in the "post -Solidarity" period. In my view this text illustrates the characteristic evolution of uniting factors: from mechanisms on the macro level (in the Solidarity period) to mechanisms located rather at the micro organic level (in networks of relations between people in conditions of a deficit of macro-social trust capital)[iii].

[ii]This question has been presented in an exhaustive manner from the theoretical point of view in the most recent work of M.Marody and A.Giza-Poleszczuk with the title: Przemiany więzi społecznych (The Changes of Social Bonds), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warsaw 2005

[iii] Perhaps the experience of Solidarity analyzed overall in this perspective was an exception, and generally micro-social factors prevail.

2. From solidarity to post-solidarity

There is a popular stereotype, according to which the Solidarity revolution begun in Poland more than a quarter-century ago is a good example of a revolution that eats its own children and replaces with new inequalities the old ones against which it fought. Usually mentioned as an illustration is the fate of the workers who were first heroes of the struggle for the fall of communism, and then when that was over, became in a large part victims of introduction of the market. I do not intend to put that view in question completely, although it contains a lot of simplifications. It is true that one of the very important lessons of the past fifteen years of transformation has taught us that there is a fundamental difference between the collapse of the old system and the building of a new one. This difference concerns the logic of the two phases and the actors engaged in them (Rychard 1993). Nevertheless the assertion that anti-communist revolution devastates its children is an oversimplification. Solidarity had many children and not all of them afterwards became victims of the revolution they began.

The first of these simplifying assumptions is that Solidarity was a single unified movement. Of course from the very beginning it was greatly differentiated internally. It was differentiated on the ideological level, joining elements of populism, traditionalism and the urge to modernize- to show just one of the kinds of difference. It was also non-homogenous in terms of organization joining the form of a trade union with an important role for structures based on regions rather than trades. These are only two examples of the generally known multi-dimensionality of the Solidarity movement.

The second tacit assumption is the judgement that the Solidarity revolution is over. That would mean that we can already assess its results. That also is an oversimplification. Solidarity gave birth or dramatically accelerated the process of social transformation which definitely has not yet ended. Finally, there is the third assumption according to which Solidarity was a stable, unchanging phenomenon. As we know, in reality the Solidarity movement evolved and changed fundamentally: it changed its character and its aims. To give but one example it is enough to remember how different were the Solidarity views of the market and privatization in 1980 and in 1989.

This is one among several reasons why it is impossible to give one answer to the question how the anticommunist revolution treated its children. These revolutions, and the Solidarity revolution belongs among them, had many heroes: some disappeared, some changed from heroes to victims and some successfully adapted to the new situation. Equally as a consequence there arose new mechanisms of social disintegration and social inequality. However there also arose new mechanisms ensuring some level of social integration, or at least preventing an accumulation of the processes of disintegration. In the considerations below I present a particular hypothesis about them, concentrating mainly on institutional mechanisms.

One of the basic questions then is that of the mechanisms of social integration and disintegration that we can perceive by analysis of the Solidarity movement. Overall

the key question is how was it possible for this movement to come about in Poland. Stereotypical answers refer to traditions of uprising and protest in post-war Poland, which shaped the socially-rooted repertoire of behaviour of non-acceptance, almost institutionalizing the industrial strike as a constant mechanism revealing tension and conflict in the system. This is undoubtedly an important factor, but in spite of this it is worth posing the question of how it happened that a movement like Solidarity arose in a country which Elżbieta and Jacek Tarkowski (1994) saw as an example of a society of "amoral familialism", being a federation of small internally strongly integrated and mutually competitive groups. From this point of view Solidarity was rather an exception than the rule. That is why it is worth looking more closely at its internal differentiation because we can see in it certain elements of the mechanisms of disintegration.

The celebrations of the 25th anniversary of Solidarity in August 2005 reminded us that the varied character of the movement is not just a question of present interpretation because it has been built into the movement from its very beginning. At the time of the celebrations mentioned we saw how different politicians tried to convince public opinion that it was their particular group that properly understood the message of the Solidarity movement. Even the SLD, a party after all directly derived from the milieu of Solidarity's main historic opponent, appealed to the legacy of the 21 postulates of workers during the famous Gdańsk strike which gave the movement its beginning. This, for obvious reasons, provoked undiluted criticism from different quarters and in this sense was a counter-productive move on the part of the SLD which had so frequently called for the end of divisions and historical disagreements. It achieved the opposite effect: through the attempt to appropriate the symbolism of Solidarity it united, admittedly only for a short while, almost the whole of the anti-communist opposition, and increased the divisions which it had always wanted to weaken. Perhaps those events show that Jacek Kurczewski (2005) was right to say that Solidarity remained the only pure uncontaminated "founding myth" particularly when compared to that of the worn out "myth of the Round Table". However it is probably not only the need for such a myth that makes such different social and political forces so willingly admit to roots in Solidarity. The historic differentiation of the movement makes such phenomena possible. If we look at the list of 21 postulates of the Gdańsk shipyard formulated in the summer of 1980 then it becomes clear that drawn up in those postulates were various, not always easily reconcilable aims. If we were to divide the postulates into two basic groups concerning the social principles of justice and democracy in public life then the potential inconsistencies would be visible in both categories. The workers wanted to ration food, which would without doubt have given an egalitarian impulse in a situation of shortage of goods, and at the same time they postulated promotion of managers according to the principles of meritocracy. Where the political aims of the movement are concerned, definitely pluralism and democracy are present in the postulates (independent trades unions, freeing of political prisoners). However the subsequent activity of the movement showed how important were also the ethical, moral dimensions of politics. That in the the view of some authors could have hindered the building of the political system (see eg. Linz, Stepan 1996: 272). So, then, from the very beginning there were present in the movement's programme and activity both a more political perspective and one strongly accentuating moral values.

It is necessary to add to the above the process of evolutionary change undergone by the movement. The beginning for obvious reasons was an attempt to repair and reform real socialism (socialism – yes, pathologies - no). This character of the beginning of the movement was influenced not only by geopolitics and tactical considerations: Solidarity at the beginning of the 1980s was in its essence much more socialist than the same movement at the end of the decade. It began with the slogans of attempts at reform which given the nature of the system showed themselves to be impossible to implement, and then only after that, the programme became successively more radical. In fact through the impossibility of those reforms Solidarity proved the impossibility of reforming "real socialism", thereby opening the way to fundamental constitutional changes and introduction of the market and democracy. Although the reasons for which the Solidarity reforms did not succeed are above all of a political nature, nevertheless even if we make the unrealistic assumption that these reasons did not exist, after a certain period of time it would have been apparent that the proposed self-government solutions, to a large extent comprising a substitution of bottom-up for top-down politicization, would not resolve the basic problem of the Polish economy- its inefficiency. We must remember, after all, that discussion about market solutions began in Poland really only half way through the 1980s. At the beginning the Solidarity movement looked for solutions in mechanisms of self- government, and market notions only appeared later.

All of this brought about the unique character of the Solidarity movement. Our understanding of this uniqueness also helps us to understand the social mechanisms of integration and disintegration resulting from the activity of that movement. This uniqueness in my view consists above all in bringing together two kinds of aim within one organization. Firstly, Solidarity was certainly a movement with a populist character, if by that we understand it as subject to the popular mood, aiming at representation of the majority of society as well as general defence of working people, of the weaker, being at the same time a movement with an ideologically differentiated profile. It was a populist movement in the sense that it was directed against the establishment of the time. However, and here we come to the second characteristic of Solidarity, the political establishment of the time was in the nature of things anti-market and anti-democratic, so therefore taking up an anti-establishment orientation meant somehow implicit support for the market and for democracy. That meant support for ideas of modernization. Of course as has been indicated more than once, that support rested to a large extent on unclear and stereotypical expectations about the market and- to a certain degree too- an unclear vision of democracy. This nonetheless however constituted one of the important features of Solidarity at that time. In precisely that way Solidarity also supported the programme of modernizing the country, setting the seal on its uniqueness. To a certain degree that uniqueness also arose from the state of development (or perhaps rather the state of underdevelopment) at the time of the functionally specialized institutional structure: confrontation with one opponent promoted unification of the opposition. That underdevelopment was after all an immanent characteristic of communism: as was noted, communist political party was essentially an "economic party" (because that was it was mainly concerned with), and the industrial enterprise was – as Witold Morawski (1994) remarked - one of the more important political institutions.

We can say that the present state of development of the institutional system is clearly different. Apart from that, the terms “political party” and also ”enterprise” are more unambiguous whilst other social aspirations and interests find their outlet in separate forms of organization. We have both parties with a clearly populist character, and groupings (although perhaps weaker) with a more modernizing character.

I mention these facts because the uniqueness of the Solidarity movement, thanks to which it could build certain mechanisms of social integrations, is only visible against the background they provide. This double role of Solidarity was particularly visible during the first phase of transformation toward a market economy. For it was precisely then that a government supported by the movement began great changes. Up to the present, and certainly for a long time to come, a dispute will continue whether the relatively low level of social conflict at the beginning of the 1990s was the result of a credit of trust from the first non-communist government (or at any rate non-communist prime minister) or also rather a consequence of the demobilization of the working class lost in a situation in which those who had hitherto represented “us” became a part of “them”, forming a government together. Independently of which interpretation is nearer the truth, it is a fact that the line of demarcation between “us” and “them” underwent a certain blurring at that time. And that is an indicator of a weakening of the processes of social disintegration.

As we know, this process did not last very long. After an initial period of softening, conflicts again began to make themselves felt. Also, however, and we should remember this, the level of industrial conflict was fairly low bearing in mind how radical was the transformation. Solidarity without doubt played its role and in fact we know more about the results of that than about the factors which brought it about.

These factors are of interest however. I will ask again then, how did it happen that in a country where “amoral familialism” was dominant such a movement could occur? How in a country without bonds, in which in the view of Stefan Nowak there was a chasm between integration on the micro scale and its lack on the macro scale, was Solidarity possible? Of course there are various possible explanations. Firstly, Solidarity was in fact only a federation of solidarity of group interests (fears?) which integrated in the face of conflict with “them” and, when this conflict retreated into the background, reappeared to begin to put an end to its mission. Moreover it is possible to show that Solidarity was the fruit of a particular time characterized by the breakdown of the possibility of advance of the working class formed by communism (Jacek Kurczewski’s well-known conception of a ”new middle class” perhaps goes in this direction). After all - and this by no means exhausts the range of possible explanations - perhaps this was a logical consequence of the well–rooted tradition of revolt against communism in Poland. These few interpretations given as examples are in no way contradictory - certainly together they explain something although certainly not everything.

Apart from these possible factors, perhaps it is worth asking whether Solidarity was also an attempt to build bonds integrating society on different principles from those of pathology/corruption? This of course need not be the only reason for its occurrence, but who knows if this was not also its outcome (not entirely fulfilled). I will return to this problem in later parts of the analysis.

Until now I have concentrated on the possible integrating effects of a movement which arose in a disintegrating society. Of course this movement (speaking generally) in an obvious way introduced causes of differentiation into Polish society. In the end, the market builds inequality. However, we should also remember that these inequalities are evaluated variously depending on whether we regard them to be justified or otherwise. In Poland there still persists a certain support for differences arising from so called meritocratic considerations, while there is a rejection of those resulting from cronyism, connections etc. This is clear. The Solidarity changes (I use this vague term to denote changes after 1989) had the aim (if we remember the postulates of the first Solidarity, but afterwards too) of introducing "meritocratic" rules. What happened afterwards is a different matter. Today, when we see large fortunes amassed without a "meritocratic" basis, murky links between business and politics, we are sometimes inclined to think that was utopian.

However, we must also remember the results of research into social structure that clearly show a growth of its coherence understood as the level of linkage between for example income from work and education (Domański 1996). It is also worth remembering that the view that Polish business mainly emerged from the communist nomenklatura is not supported by the facts. As we know, the researches of Henryk Domański (1997:56) document that close to 40% of Polish male entrepreneurs from the 1990s came from the working class. Of course, certainly we are dealing here with small-scale entrepreneurs, but we remember too that it is precisely those entrepreneurs who provide a significant part of Polish national income. That is why, too, when we speak about the Polish working class which was the prime mover behind the collapse of communism itself collapsing (I am exaggerating here slightly) as a result of the introduction of capitalism, we must remember that the picture is far from being unambiguous. It is also not unambiguous that during the strike at FSM in 1993, inside the factory on one side were the strikers and on the other side of the fence were workers, who wanted to work, protesting against the strikers. That was one of the signs of the beginning of the differentiation of interests within that group, frequently noted by researchers. In effect workers as a class are certainly worse off (despite all differentiation), although it is not entirely clear for which part of the class this is true.

However, the most important lesson from the Solidarity experience is its heterogeneous character, linking modernization and populism, market and labour, pluralism and integration. These linkages definitely helped Polish democratic and market transition to succeed. That is why it is quite paradoxical that the new political leadership represented by the Law and Justice party which came to power after the 2005 elections presents a vision of two Polands: the Poland of solidarity values and an entirely different Poland of pro-market, liberal values. This vision completely neglects or even rejects the historical experience of the real Solidarity movement which was about bringing these "two Polands" together. The paradox is that the leaders of this party claim they represent the legacy of the Solidarity movement while simultaneously rejecting its essence.

The mechanisms of social integration and disintegration to which the Solidarity movement gave rise cannot be described without mentioning its role in the adaptation of

Poles to the demands of the market. It is not only that a large share of industrialists originated from that class. It is above all a mass participation in the institutions of the market. Of course, to a large extent this was forced, which is why it was on a larger scale than participation in democracy (Rychard 2004). But this too has its consequences. Participation in the market- in the role of consumer-does not usually provoke collective action[iv]. Nevertheless this has consequences for the stability or destabilization of the social order. My view is that participation in the market by consumers rather stabilizes than destabilizes the situation. Probably it was not a strong cause of disintegration dividing Poland into two, or even more, incompatible parts. Perhaps then it is worth looking at those factors which prevent fundamental division? In my view they can be seen not only as the result of the actions of particular groups, classes or other individual actors, but rather as the result of a specific arrangement of relations between them.

3. Institutions and networks of social capital

3.1 Usefulness of the concepts of networks and social capital

For a while now in descriptions of the situation in Poland conceptions referring to the idea of social networks have also been gaining popularity. This idea has been for years a useful analytical tool allowing us to understand complex forms of organization and exchanges between them (see eg Smith-Doerr, Powell 2005). Nevertheless in Polish conditions there exist certain additional factors that make this approach useful. Above all we see the weakening of the significance of the role of mass collective social actors (of classes, social movements) in the "post Solidarity" period and an enlargement of the role of local actors and the links between them as I have analysed elsewhere (Rychard 2002:156-160). This is particularly visible in the growth of significance of the role of consumer and consumer behaviour in general and these are the domain of individual rather than collective actions. The concept of networks seems then to be the right tool permitting analysis of links between many scattered local actors.

There is one more reason. The existence of many hybrid institutional solutions in countries undergoing transformation is generally noted. These hybrids join solutions appropriate to the previous system with elements of the new, creating "new quality" amenable to explanation neither within the framework of the old model nor within that of the new system. At the same time we can see the appropriateness of the idea of networks for comprehending this hybrid reality. This is because networks are for

[iv] It is true that in communist times it did give rise to collective action, when eg workers in their role as consumers protested by striking against price rises. Today however collective action by consumers probably does not occur at all any more (yet?).

example neither a market nor a hierarchy (see eg. Stark, Bruszt,1998) and so lend themselves well to description of incomplete transformation. In addition this is transformation during which at almost very turn various 'affairs' are discovered involving murky links between business and administration, the role of informal links is revealed, which seriously modify the formal hierarchy of power. So the idea of networks grows in importance together with interest in informal problems (Smith-Doerr, Powell 2005).

It is worth seeing notions of networks in their relation to the concept of social capital frequently propagated and distributed precisely by such networks. James Coleman (1990: 300-306) defines social capital in terms of properties of relations between actors, and not in terms of the properties of the actors themselves. An important element of these properties is the relation of trust. As sociologists inform us Polish society has a relatively low level of the social capital of trust. This is because such capital may be regarded as being as much a characteristic of interpersonal relationships as a characteristic of the society as a whole (Misztal 2000). Recently this theme has been taken up by Henryk Domański (2005) showing with the help of European Social Survey (ESS) data that the level of personal, just as much as the level of institutional, trust is very low in Poland compared with that in other European countries. This observation, supported too by the results of other investigations does not just give us knowledge about the state of Polish society. There exist well-founded theories showing that the level and quality of social capital depends on the level of modernization and economic development. It is enough here to recall the well-known ideas of Robert Putnam (1995) and Francis Fukuyama (1997). In Poland these ideas are to some extent represented by certain theses of Jacek Kochanowicz and Mirosława Marody (2003). With a certain degree of simplification they lead to the view that, because of a lack of cultural readiness on the part of Polish society, manifesting itself in, among other things, a low level and low quality of social capital, the present economic transformation proceeds rather superficially, being a matter rather of somewhat artificial imitations of western models in a culturally alien surrounding. This thesis, still along the lines of Polanyi's thought about the impossibility of a market economy in a non-market society is mainly the subject of ideological disputes, although it would be worthwhile to subject it to some sort of empirical testing. This is because it is possible to bring to bear the opposite view that because of mass participation in the market it is difficult to talk here of an entirely artificial implant. This after all is not matter of participation exclusively as consumer but also on the pretty-well mass scale with strong social roots that we see in the cases of small and medium enterprise in Poland.

3.2 Networks of trust and institutions

Let us try then to add some empirical illustrations to these observations[1]. As I mentioned earlier, Poles in comparison with people in other countries, have an extremely low level of trust capital -whether institutional or personal- the lowest level among countries investigated by the ESS; the leaders are the Scandinavian countries (Domański 2005). A closer look at the data shows that in particular countries there is noticeable link between institutional trust (measured by trust of politicians) and personal trust. In Poland this level is 0.229 (Pearson r) and in all countries varies between 0.120 and 0.334. It is not then a strong correlation and its level is varied to a small extent between particular countries. I would like to ascertain whether the level of trust is connected with the level of social activity [v] or the strength of the support network people have[vi]. It was seen that if any dependences occur, they clearly closely connect (although the level of these correlations is low) individual trust and a strong support network or individual trust and a level of activity. Trust of politicians is practically everywhere independent of (or: very weakly dependent on) level of activity and strength of support network. These results are understandable: after all it was to be expected that precisely a low level of trust in institutions of the system could lead to activity and strength of support (in fact in two countries there are traces of a negative dependence) and in any case trust of politicians is not connected with undertaking some social activity.

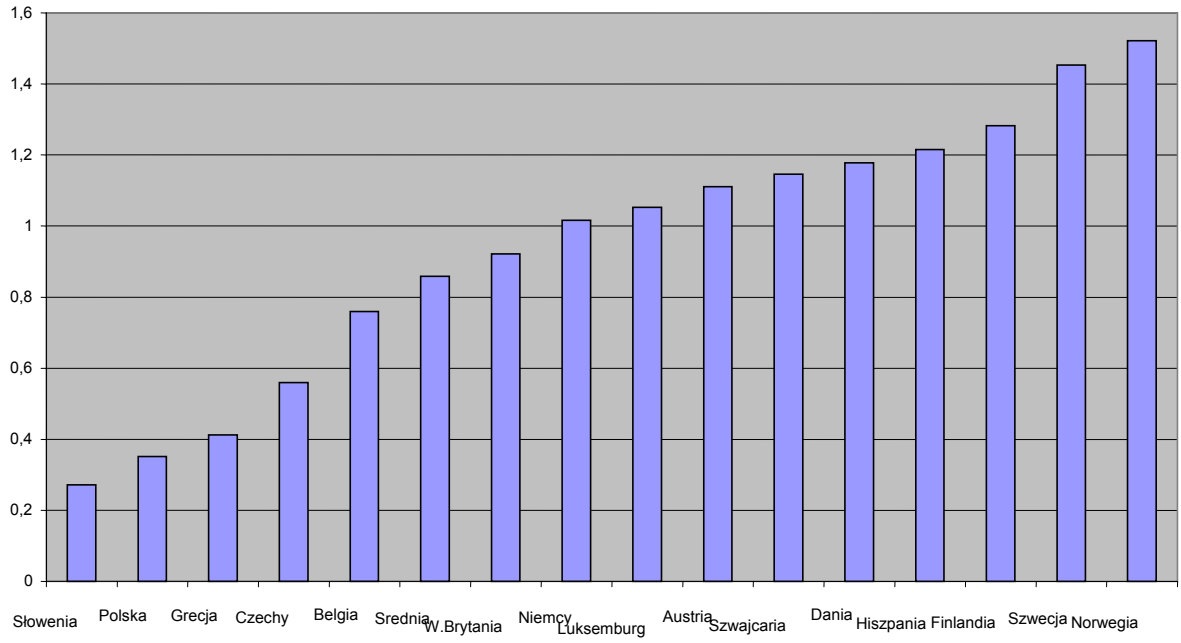
Of course we do not know what is the direction of the dependence: whether trust in people "creates" a support network and activity or whether also trust is created by engagement in a network and social activity. Resolution of that question is certainly more likely to be found in a theory rather than in the data alone. Analysing the data, however, one can detect that between particular countries a very clear difference occurs in the values of particular variables (the next analyses also show this) whilst the patterns of dependence between variables are relatively uniform. Perhaps this means that certain patterns of dependence have a more universal character independent of the intensity of the phenomena between which the dependences occur.

Continuing the empirical illustration of the phenomenon of social capital we draw attention to the strongly differentiated level of activity of particular societies. The figure below (fig. 1) shows this, presenting the average number of actions undertaken by people to improve the situation in the country.

[1] All empirical data below come from (unless different source is mentioned) European Social Survey which Polish part was conducted by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

[vi] That however was measured with the help of a variable created as a result of factor analysis of 3 variables: frequency of social contacts (two questions) and the having someone close in whom one can confide.

Fig. 1: The number of actions undertaken by the respondent to improve the situation in the country during the last 12 months[vii].



Slovenia / Poland / Greece / Czech Rep. / Belgium / Mean Gt. Britain / Germany / Luxembourg / Austria/ Switzerland / Denmark / Spain / Finland / Sweden / Norway

Again, Poland finds itself at the tail end of the scale led as usual by the Scandinavian countries. This pattern of responses holds for the majority of the analyses carried out. This is just as in the previous edition of the ESS in which I analysed "symmetrical alienation" (of politicians with regard to people and of people with regard to politicians, A. Rychard, 2004). The leaders are the Scandinavian countries. Perhaps we are dealing there with very cohesive societies with really very high levels of social capital.

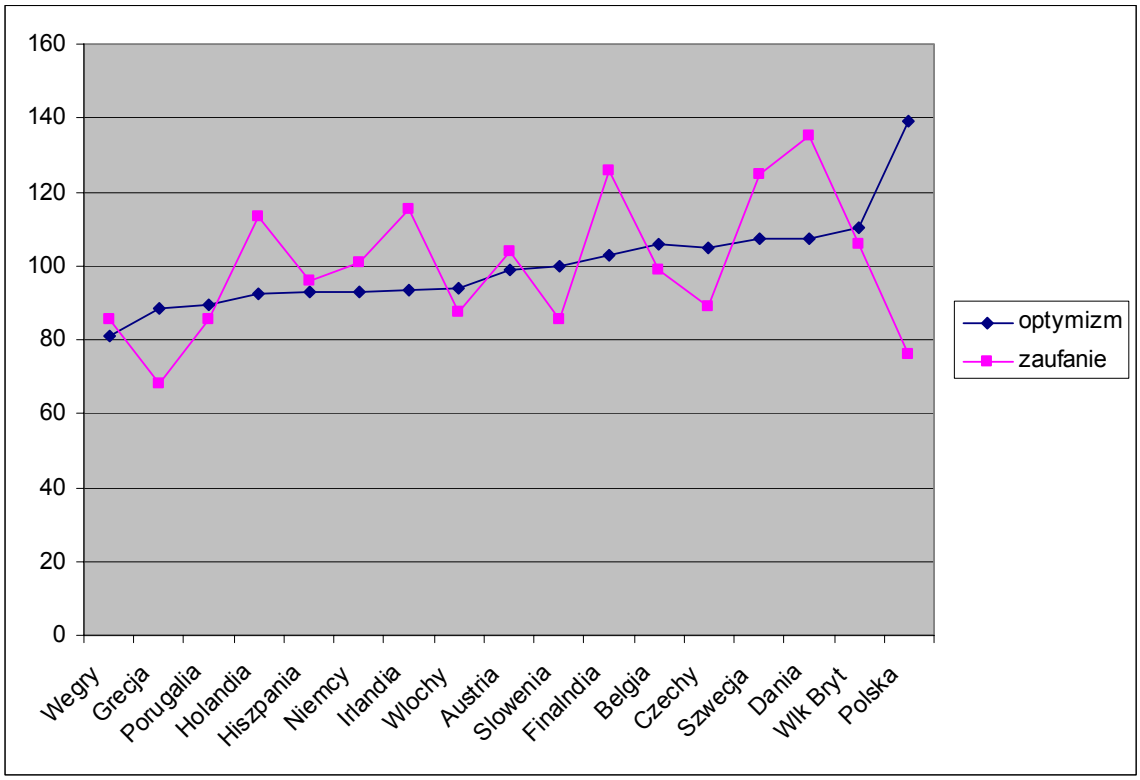
In order however not to finish this introductory analysis with an unambiguous statement of the inadequacy of Polish social capital let us try to see whether belief about whether it is possible to trust people is connected in Poland with certain indices of acceptance of the system, and of one's own life. Here we see that the level of trust is

[vii] The following kinds of activity are concerned :1) making contact with a politician or official at national or local government level; 2) activity in a political party or organization undertaking social or political action; 3) activity in another kind of organization or association; 4) carrying or displaying badges or stickers promoting some campaign or action; 5) signing a petition ; 6) participation in a legal public demonstration; 7) boycotting or deliberately not buying certain goods or products. Average figures appear in the table for such actions undertaken by respondents in particular countries along with the overall average.

intensively connected with the level of acceptance of the way in which democracy is working (r=0.277), rather more weakly with acceptance of the state of the economy (r=0.223) and most weakly with satisfaction with life (r=0.165) We can say therefore that Poles need networks of trust only to a relatively weak extent in order to feel satisfied with life.

Let us return to the thesis outlined earlier that trust is the motor of economic development. It is worthwhile therefore to compare data about the level of trust to some kind of indicator of economic optimism. A preliminary attempt at such analysis is contained in the following graph where each of the countries is characterized by two indicators: level of trust and level of consumer and producer satisfaction.

Fig. 2. Consumer and producer optimism and trust in people in selected countries of the European Unionviii.



optymizm = optimism / zaufanie = trust

Hungary / Greece / Portugal / Netherlands / Spain / Germany / Ireland / Italy / Austria / Slovenia / Finland / Belgium / Czech Rep. / Sweden / Denmark / Great Britain / Poland

[viii] Source: A. Rychard, 2005, p.121. Data on economic optimism: Bielecki 2005, data on trust to other people; Domański, 2005. In both cases mean represents 100%.

As we can see, the growing level of economic optimism is accompanied by the uneven but also moderately rising curve of trust. There is one country that deviates from any regularity: Poland. It has the lowest level of trust (apart from Greece) and the highest level of economic optimism. The data presented here are merely a modest illustration of the phenomenon. They do not allow full reference to discussion about the relation between the level of social capital and economic development. However, it certainly worthwhile to take the analysis further. This is because the low quality and level of social capital in our country remain an undoubted fact. Rapid economic growth also remains a fact. Further analysis should allow us to approach a resolution to the dispute in which at present it seems possible to outline the following positions:

In accordance with the **first** we would state that the case of Poland falsifies in general the findings of eg Fukuyama or Putnam. Growth and modernization is possible without trust. At the most, perhaps the trust in question can be awakened as a result of growth, but it need not be a necessary condition of it.

The **second** position would claim that the findings of classical research of the kind carried out by Fukuyama or Putnam keep their force but in the case of Poland we are simply not dealing with real modernization but at the most a skin-deep imitation of certain solutions and institutions. As such, this superficial modernization will shortly lose its motive force and Poland will then no longer deviate from the norm: it will occupy the position in the modernization race allowed by its social capital.

A **third** position is also possible according to which there exist certain hidden reserves of social capital of a specific kind, or reserves of its substitute which are overlooked by our researches. In fact this is not a single view, but rather a collection of possible conceptions potentially probably the most interesting for sociological exploration. It can be assumed for example that these mechanisms become apparent in micro-relations at the **enterprise** level[ix]. Moreover we can judge that the role of substitute of a kind is played by corruption (this thesis was put forward by A Koźmiński in discussion of the results presented here). This would be then a peculiar pathological "buying" of social trust capital (or more properly anti-capital). This view can be broadened indicating the various kinds of pathological bonds of the "dirty community" (to refer to the well-known conception of A. Podgórecki). These mechanisms of substitution can be seen in informal processes and structures that need not always have a pathological character. In my view it is one of the most promising directions for investigation. These informal bonds and the procedures and institutional solutions similar to them prevent the institutional order from undergoing disintegration. They would be maintained in a state of "controlled dispersal " every now and again joined back together with those micro-bonds, sometimes of a pathological character, sometimes not, but frequently informal. This hypothetical state of affairs probably also clarifies why in spite of a low level of social trust capital in Poland, the level of social

[ix] This hypothesis is put forward and tested by Joanna Perzanowska in her MA thesis (2006). The author looks at the factors influencing economic success in a society without trust. Preliminary results of her research indicate that the level of trust in selected groups of businessmen is higher than the level of trust in society as a whole.

conflict is also low. This is explained well by Janusz Czapiński's (2005) thesis based on the results of his research about the individualism of the resourceful Poles who do not so much revolt against the inefficient state as manage to get on without it.

To conclude this part of the discussion I would like to consider a certain peculiarity of weak social capital in Poland. As I have indicated, Scandinavian countries constitute here a certain kind of pattern. Let us look more closely at this by analysing responses to the question about on whom respondents could count if they wanted access to benefits to which they were not entitled. Comparison of the responses of Poles and Swedes brings interesting results.

Tab. 1: To whom among your friends, acquaintances or relations could you turn for help to obtain benefits or services to which you are not entitled.

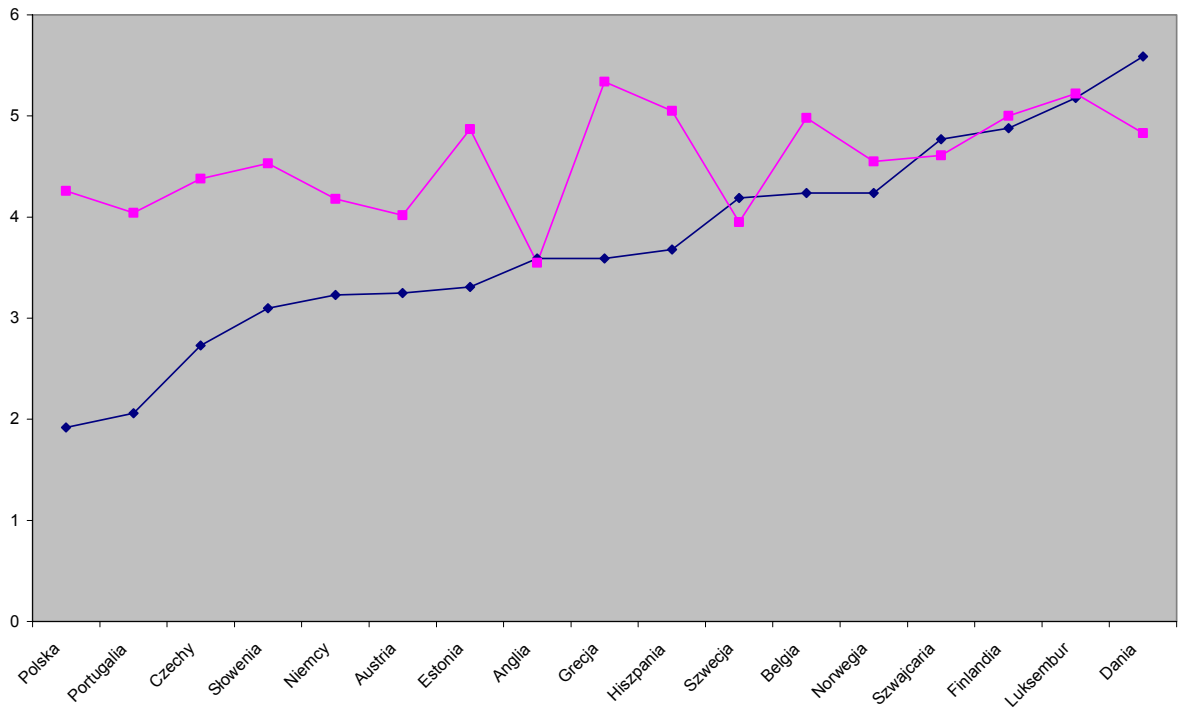
	Poland	Sweden
	(N=1561)	(N=1912)
To none of them	24.1	58.3
To a few of them	45.3	28.2
To a significant group of them	2.6	6.5
To most or all of them	2.9	1.6
I would never try to do that	15.1	5.4

Poles have more scope for mobilizing that „negative" social capital: in our country the most frequent response is that it would be possible to count in such circumstances on a small group of acquaintances, friends or relations. In Sweden however it is most frequently believed that in such circumstances one cannot count on anyone else. And that result is somehow intuitively understandable. What is interesting however is that difficulty in engaging social capital to "rip off" benefits to which they are not entitled seems somehow to trouble Swedes: three times less frequently than Poles they state that they would never do this. Are they the simply more honest or would they nevertheless sometimes like to 'dirty' their community a little? Let us leave a question mark here.

4. Instead of a conclusion: Polish and European institutions and trust capital

Although I appealed above to the results of comparative research I would like to supplement these with an even more "comparative" perspective. This is because I am concerned here with the results concerning trust of local and European political institutions in separate countries. This allows conclusions to be drawn about networks and trust capital at not only the local, national, level, but also to take a broader view. As we know from other sources, EU institutions are more highly regarded in Poland than are the Polish authorities (K.Pankowski, 2003). Delegitimization of the Polish political system is particularly visible when seen against evaluations of EU institutions, trust in which seems to be much more a function of lack of trust in Polish politics than the result of being well acquainted with EU procedures and institutions. Looking at this phenomenon in a comparative perspective provides new information.

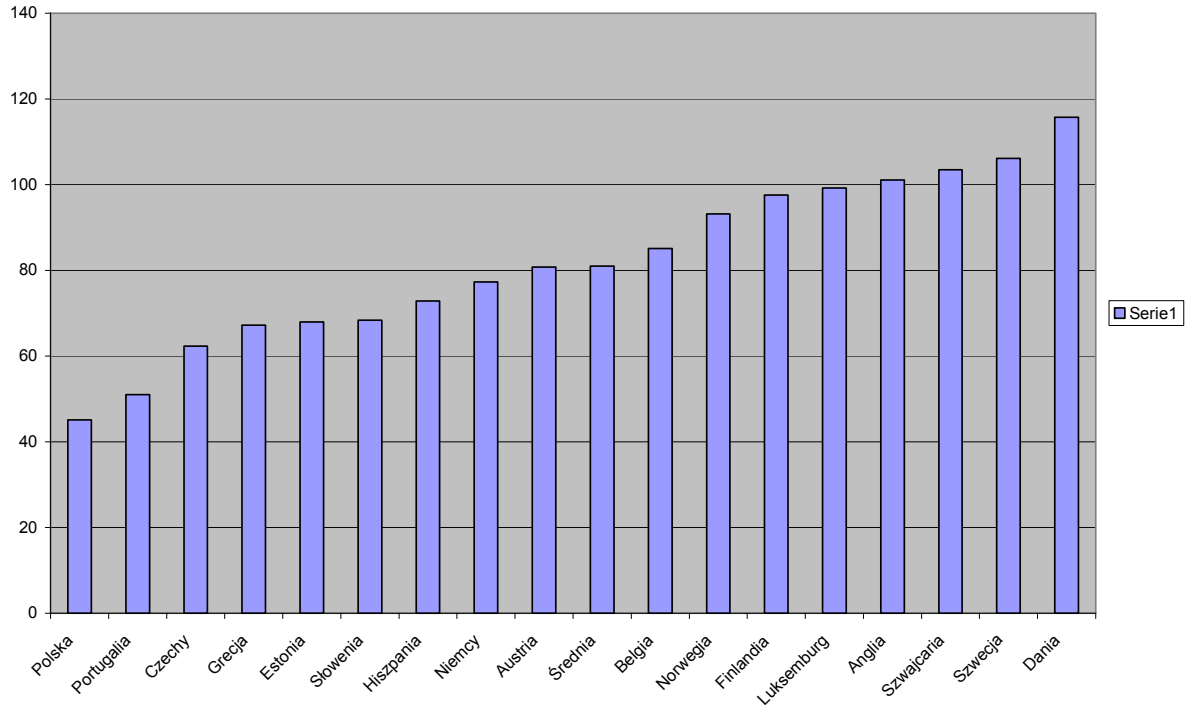
Fig 3 Trust in politicians (blue line) and in the European parliament (red line)[x]



Poland / Portugal / Czech Rep. / Slovenia / Germany / Austria / Estonia / England / Greece / Spain / Sweden / Belgium / Norway / Switzerland / Finland / Luxembourg / Denmark

[x] Trust was measured on a scale from 0 to 10.

Fig 4 Trust in politicians in a given country as a percentage of trust in the European Parliament



Poland / Portugal / Czech Rep. / Slovenia / Germany / Austria / Estonia / England / Greece / Spain / Sweden / Belgium / Norway / Switzerland / Finland / Luxembourg / Denmark

Both figures provide interesting information. Above all we see that the degree of convergence between the level of trust in local political institutions and the level of trust in European political institutions is higher in countries with a high level of trust in both politicians and in the European Parliament. This however is not a straight-line dependency. Fig. 4 gives us other information. It shows us the relation between support for politicians and support for the European Parliament in a given country. It is possible to distinguish three groups of countries: those with a clear prevalence of belief in EU institutions over belief in national politics (the index on fig. 4 is less than 100 %); countries with a balance of trust (index close to 100%) and a small group of countries with higher regard for national institutions than for European ones. To this last group belong countries that are rather reluctantly European such as England, Denmark, Sweden or which do not belong to the EU-Switzerland. The first group however is most interesting, since Poland stands out with a level of trust in politicians a little above 40% of the level of trust in the European Parliament. We can conclude then that in the case of Poland this is mainly the effect mentioned above of delegitimation of national politics.

Let us notice here that we have touched upon an interesting paradox. Polish society clearly signals its trust of European institutions; this is particularly so when seen in the context of the low level of trust for national politicians. At the same time however it supports a political force (the Law and Justice political party) that is very reluctant

where deepening of European integration is concerned, and in its proposals for repairing the Polish state it prefers local and traditional means rather than making use of European experience (A Rychard, 2005b). The question arises how long this divergence can be sustained and in what direction its reconciliation will go. Will support for reluctantly European parties fall, or will on the contrary support for European institutions decrease? Although no possibility can be ruled out, we also cannot reject the possibility that this divergence will continue to hold and that Poles will 'use different optics' for looking at national and European politics, and these optics will function independently of one another.

These analyses constitute an attempt at preliminary identification of the problem of networks of social trust capital with reference to institutions. It seems that on the basis of this preliminary analysis it is difficult to find important strata of this trust, which does not also mean that the institutional order is unambiguously rejected. We may even say that to a certain extent Polish society is held together by a shared lack of trust in politics. We know that trust in extra-political institutions and mechanisms is higher. We know too that participation in these mechanisms and institutions (eg markets) is also higher than in the case of politics. At the same time however, as both the data mentioned here and other analyses (eg that in J.Czapiński, 2005) show, this participation is rather based on mechanisms of individual resourcefulness than on collective action. It seems it is in this way that a society which formed the movement based on massive social trust capital that was Solidarity could go in a certain sense into a "post transformation" phase of development in which the individualization of strategies for action seemed to chime more with market principles than the language of collective action. This happened in parallel to a movement from a "political-civic" phase of engagement to a "consumption-market" phase. The fact of the matter is that the individualization which could constitute the beginning of a network of social trust probably remains at the moment in a "pre-network" stage: people see their social and institutional surroundings as alien. We cannot rule out therefore that networks form and operate at the micro-social level based on informal mechanisms and ties (which should not be confused with pathological ones) and that they constitute capital of social support. Such informal 'micro-networks' are certainly difficult to detect using the mass research of which I have outlined the results here. In order to find them, qualitative rather than quantitative methods are necessary. In short we can assume that in a society with a generally low level of trust capital some sort of micro-networks of trust form. Because this happens in parallel to the above mentioned "depoliticization" and "economization" of survival strategies, it is surely worth looking for those networks rather in the "extra-political" areas of Poles' activity. This seems to be an interesting area for future research work.

There is one more characteristic feature of these trust networks. They are certainly more easily visible by analysis of behaviour than by analysis of declarations. It is therefore completely understandable that in a society in which so many people are convinced that it is difficult to trust others, that these others are rather a potential threat than a source of support, at the same time many micro-networks of support develop based mainly on informal ties between people who are close to one another. We can

even put it more strongly: it is precisely this conviction that the world of “others”, “outsiders”, is a potential threat that favours the building of these micro-networks of trust.

Therefore it is probably worthwhile to see the results of research indicating such a low level of trust capital in Poland in a perspective rather different from that which dominates at present. It seems that they inform us more about a feeling of lack of security in the social and institutional macro world than about the lack of scope for depending on some local trust network. Perhaps then Poles are not so much individualists as much as participants to a greater extent in a ”micro-social” rather than “macro-social “life. In other words it does not follow from the fact that we can see from mass research such a negligible level of social trust capital that it has completely “evaporated”: perhaps it is simply more concealed and that to reach it somewhat more subtle methods are required.

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